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HABITAT II HIGHLIGHTS SATURDAY, 8 JUNE 1996

Working Groups I and II of Committee I met all day Saturday to continue negotiations on the Habitat Agenda. A Drafting Group that was charged with considering outstanding text from Working Group I also met. Little progress was reported from this Group.

WORKING GROUP I

IV. GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION

The CHAIR of the Drafting Group on a right to adequate housing, Marcela Nicodemos (BRAZIL), reported that with the exception of a reference to forced eviction in **44bis**, all relevant paragraphs are agreed. In **2bis** (access to safe and healthy shelter), a bracketed reference to "the right to adequate housing" is deleted. In **9** (absolute poverty), reference to the right to an adequate standard of living is drawn from the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Paragraph **13bis** (formed from **13**) (international instruments), reaffirms commitment to ensuring human rights and the right to adequate housing, taking into account that the right, as included in the cited international instruments, shall be realized progressively. In **24** (obligation of Governments), most of the language from the draft Habitat Agenda (A/CONF.165/L.1) is retained. Paragraphs **44** (right to adequate standard of living) and **44bis** (actions by Governments) were merged into one paragraph. A reference to countries' responsibilities is replaced with "all Governments." Subparagraph **44(a)** refers to discrimination. In **44(c)** "domestic" is deleted from a reference to mobilizing innovative resources. The Group proposed that **48ter** (discrimination) be deleted.

C. Sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world: In **92bis** (population), delegates agreed to split the paragraph and began informal consultations. In **93** (human health), delegates amended the original and added text from the alternative formulation regarding a holistic approach to health. Text regarding the contribution of improved health to economic and social development was deleted. The G-77/CHINA proposed to delete "people are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature" but the US and the EU objected. The US amended the reference to children. The US introduced a **93bis** regarding lead poisoning prevention.

In **94** (health problems from adverse environmental conditions), the EU, supported by the G-77/CHINA, deleted

bracketed text regarding the disproportionate effect of environmental degradation on vulnerable groups. Brackets were removed from **95** (environmental risks in the home and workplace) with the G-77/CHINA's addition of "children" and AUSTRALIA's addition of "rates of exposure."

In **95ter** (waste management), the US deleted "particularly in industrialized countries." Paragraph **95quater** (design of built environment) was amended with "the design of high-rise housing should complement the context of the neighborhood and community in which it will be located (US). The large-scale development of high-rise housing can bring social and environmental disadvantages and therefore special attention should be paid to the quality of its design (EU), including scale and height (NORWAY), proper maintenance, regular technical inspection and safety measures (EU)." TURKEY submitted a new **95quinquies** regarding livability of the built environment.

In **98(a)** (water), CANADA added practices and patterns of "production." In **98(a)bis** (clean water), JAPAN deleted the target date of 2000. Delegates approved a reference to "as soon as possible." The G-77/CHINA introduced a reference to hazardous waste and replaced a target date of 2025 with "as soon as possible." AUSTRALIA included "hazardous waste." In **98(c)bis** (generation of waste), the EU suggested "goals for the reduction of packaging."

MOROCCO proposed a new **98bis(b)** regarding the establishment of greenbelts around urban and rural agglomerations. In **98bis(c)** (land-based marine pollution), ICELAND, supported by NORWAY and CANADA, added "significantly" reduce and deleted "most" productive areas. CANADA added "coastal areas." The EU added a new **98ter(f)bis** regarding recycling of sewage. CANADA added new subparagraphs on aquatic ecosystem preservation and restoration; water use efficiency in agriculture and industry; and women's participation in water conservation, management and technological choice.

In **99** (transboundary pollution), the US added "can" before a phrase that pollution represents a serious threat, but the EU objected. "Can" was inserted in brackets. The G-77/CHINA and the US agreed to replace "bilateral and multilateral" with "international" legal mechanisms. In **99bis** (preventing transboundary pollution), the US preferred the environmental impact of proposed "activities" and, with TURKEY, suggested adding evaluation of "relevant" comments provided by potentially affected countries. Bracketed references to

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significant/gravely hazardous/adverse impacts on the environment were deleted.

In **100** (sustainable energy use), the G-77/CHINA, supported by AUSTRALIA, replaced energy sources “based on fossil fuels” with “non-renewable” and added “can” lead to climate change. In **101**, IRAN and SAUDI ARABIA inserted “efficient and” sustainable energy use. In **101(b)** (energy-pricing policies), IRAN added “due consideration should be paid to those countries whose economies are based on oil,” but the US and the EU objected. The subparagraph was bracketed.

WORKING GROUP II

E. International cooperation and coordination: At the suggestion of the G-77/CHINA, delegates merged **156** and **156bis** to note that the Habitat Agenda adds new elements to the agenda for national actions and international cooperation, and that implementation should take place in a coordinated framework.

The G-77/CHINA proposed a new **156ter**, which states that the nature of urban and rural challenges requires better coordination between governments, international bodies, multilateral and bilateral partners, and more effective cooperation between UNCHS and entities within and outside the UN system. The US added “governments at all levels,” and the EU proposed “local authorities and civil society.” The EU bracketed the reference to UNCHS pending the outcome of Section F (follow-up and implementation). The G-77/CHINA bracketed the entire paragraph rather than only the UNCHS reference.

In **157** (chapeau) (action by UN system), the EU and the US supported retaining the bracketed reference to “where appropriate.” The G-77/CHINA proposed deleting the reference. During discussion of **157(d)**, ZAMBIA proposed that action be taken “within the legal, institutional and policy frameworks of each country.” AUSTRALIA, the US and the EU stated that “where appropriate” in the chapeau covered this concern. Delegates included “in accordance with the legal framework of each country” and “where appropriate” in the chapeau.

In **157(d)** (cooperation with civil society), delegates added a LOCAL AUTHORITY-proposed reference to cooperation with associations and networks of local authorities. The US added **150(e)bis**, calling for public-private partnerships in socially and environmentally responsible community investment programmes.

Delegates returned to **145ter** (international migration) during the afternoon. MEXICO proposed text noting that international migration can facilitate the transfer of skills and contribute to cultural enrichment and that it may give rise to racism and acts of violence against migrants. The US and UAE objected to the part regarding racism, which was deleted.

F. Implementation and follow-up of the Global Plan of Action: At the end of the morning session, the Chair opened the floor for statements from regional groups on Section F. The EU said there were many rumors regarding the EU position on follow-up. He said his position provides a comprehensive role for the Commission and UNCHS. The mandate of both organs should be carefully considered and the Commission should give its advice on the mandates to ECOSOC, which will review all commissions next year. He said it was impossible to look at the mandates during this Conference. The substance of the GPA must first be agreed, and steps to implement the commitments must then be considered by the Commission, ECOSOC and the UN General Assembly (UNGA).

The US also noted rumors on its position since PrepCom III, but stated that it remains unchanged. There can be no effective substitute for UNCHS and the Commission, nor can there be a substitute for refocusing all UN institutions. The GPA should be completed to determine what must be done, and then the determination should be made on who will do it.

CANADA noted that the Habitat Agenda goes beyond shelter and urban issues. The review should be conducted through ECOSOC, possibly in a report from the Conference, and ultimately in the UNGA. He said delegates should not discuss specific mandates on an Agenda that is not yet complete.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION said the functioning of these organizations must be improved and their mandates must be reviewed carefully. UNCHS should play an active role in areas such as the exchange of experiences and expert review of large-scale projects.

The G-77/CHINA noted that there have been rumors, but they have a “ring of authenticity” based on past experiences. At the Rio Conference, the G-77/CHINA emphasized the importance of environmental issues, but UNEP became less important and its resources declined. He expressed concern that a similar fate would befall UNCHS. The Conference knows the shape the Agenda will take, and can reaffirm the central role of UNCHS in implementation and its need for greater resources. He noted that development agencies such as UNIDO, UNCTAD and UNCHS are often “victims” of reform and restructuring because they benefit primarily developing countries. A political message must emanate from Istanbul, and UNCHS must remain in a developing country in Africa.

During the afternoon, the US suggested clearing up outstanding text in Section E. The G-77/CHINA noted its understanding that the Group would begin consideration of Section F. The US called for adjournment so that the Vinci Group could consult. The G-77/CHINA noted that they adjourned reluctantly.

IN THE CORRIDORS

The early afternoon adjournment of Working Group II left participants discussing the text that was to be negotiated (follow-up) in the corridors. Some noted that the EU position has moved closer to that of the G-77/China than it was at PrepCom III. Differences between positions remain, however, as was evident from the opening statements during the Working Group. Some hoped that the Vinci Group, which consists of the OECD countries, could consolidate a single position.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: The Plenary will meet during the morning in the Plenary Hall to hear general statements as well as statements regarding the observance of the International Decade of the World’s Indigenous People.

WORKING GROUP I: The Working Group is expected to meet during the morning and afternoon in Conference Room 1 to begin consideration of Section D (Capacity Building).

WORKING GROUP II: The Working Group is expected to meet during the morning and afternoon in Conference Room 3 to begin consideration of Section F (follow-up).

DRAFTING GROUPS: The Drafting Group on the Istanbul Declaration is expected to begin consideration of a new draft at 2:00 pm in Conference Room A. The Drafting Group for Working Group I is expected to meet in Conference Room B.